



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

Administrative Citation Procedures Manual

Administrative Citation Procedures Manual

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Lemon Grove Municipal Code Section 1.12.012 provides the authority to issue administrative citations for violations of the City Code. The City Code provides for escalating fines for noncompliance. The Code also defines the service procedures for issuing a citation, addresses hardship waivers, and identifies the process for appeals. The purpose of this Code section is to induce compliance by applying a monetary penalty for continuing violations.

The purpose of this Procedures Manual is to establish the process by which Municipal Code Section 1.12.012 is implemented by the City. The operational policies and procedures identified in this Procedures Manual comply with applicable Municipal Code sections.

SECTION II – VIOLATIONS APPROPRIATE FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

The Municipal Code allows for the use of various tools to encourage or require abatement of Code violations. The issuance of an administrative citation for a Code violation serves as a tool for those violations that do not impose immediate health and safety risk. The issuance of a citation should be used for violations that are clear-cut, relatively uncomplicated and easily correctable. As with any enforcement tool, the decision to use administrative citations should include assessment of how effective it is likely to be in gaining compliance and whether or not it is appropriate to the situation.

SECTION III – ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION ISSUANCE POLICY

A. To Whom Citations May Be Issued

An administrative citation may be issued to the party responsible for the violation. In general, the Responsible Person as defined in the Municipal Code Section 1.12.012 would be one or more of the following:

1. The owner, tenant, or occupant of real property;
2. The holder or the agent of the holder of any permit, entitlement, or review;
3. The party or the agent of a party to an agreement covered by Chapter 1 of the Municipal Code;
4. The owner or the authorized agent of any business, company, or entity subject to Chapter 1 of the Municipal Code; or

5. The parent or legal guardian of any such person under the age of 18 years and who violates any ordinance, regulation, permit, entitlement, review, or agreement described in the Municipal Code.

Any or all of these persons or entities may be cited for the violation when a citation is justified.

B. Service of Citation Procedures

The issuance of an administrative citation should be on the appropriate City form (Exhibit A). The form should be completed in full and should be delivered to the Responsible Person in the following manner:

1. Personal Issuance – the enforcement officer shall attempt to personally serve the Responsible Person with the citation and, if possible, obtain the signature of the Responsible Person on the administrative citation form. If the Responsible Person refuses to sign the administrative citation form, the citation will remain valid.
2. Service by Mail – if the enforcement officer is unable to locate the Responsible Person, the administrative citation shall be mailed to the Responsible Person by certified mail with a requested return receipt. The administrative citation shall also be sent by first class mail. If the administrative citation sent by certified mail is returned unsigned, the letter mailed first class shall be deemed effective noticing of the violation.
3. Service by Posting Notice – if the enforcement officer does not succeed in personally delivering the administrative citation and certified mail and first class mail fails to reach the Responsible Person, the enforcement officer shall post the administrative citation on the property in violation.

After the administrative citation has been served to the Responsible Person by any of the means listed above, the enforcement officer shall complete a declaration of service.

C. Form of Citation

The administrative citation form should include the following information:

1. Date, approximate time, and address or definitive description of the location or property where the violation(s) was observed.
2. The name of the Responsible Person and, if possible, the signature of the Responsible Person.

3. The Municipal Code sections or conditions violated and a description of the violation(s).
4. An order to the Responsible Person to correct the violation(s) within a specified time period.
5. The amount of the fine for the violation(s).
6. An explanation of how the fine is to be paid and the deadline for making payment of the fine.
7. A notification that the payment of the fine does not excuse or discharge the failure to correct the violation.
8. A notice of the right and process to appeal the administrative citation.
9. The name and signature of the enforcement officer.

D. Fine Schedule

The administrative citation form should indicate whether the administrative citation is a warning or the amount of the fine. If the violation is not a critical health and safety risk, the enforcement officer shall allow the Responsible Person to abate the violation(s) within a 15-day warning period.

In the event the violation(s) are not corrected within the warning period, fines shall be assessed in the following amounts:

1. \$100 for the first administrative citation fine if the violation(s) are not corrected or if the same violation occurs a second time within the next 18-month period.
2. \$200 for the second administrative citation fine if the violation(s) are not corrected or if the same violation occurs a third time within the next 18-month period.
3. \$500 for the third administrative citation fine if the violation(s) are not corrected or if the same violation occurs a fourth time within the next 18-month period.
4. \$1,000 for the fourth administrative citation fine if the violation(s) are not corrected or if the same violation occurs a fifth and/or subsequent time within the next 18-month period.

E. Satisfaction of Citation

If a warning administrative citation is issued and the violation(s) is corrected within the specified warning period, the case shall be closed. However, if fines are levied, in order to satisfy the administrative citation, the Responsible Person shall correct the violation and pay the fine within thirty (30) days from the correction date listed on the administrative citation. Fines shall be made payable to the City of Lemon Grove.

SECTION IV – APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

A. Process of Appeal

A recipient of an administrative citation may contest the violation or whether he or she is the Responsible Person for the violation. To contest the administrative citation, the recipient must complete a Request for an Appeal Hearing form (Exhibit B). The form should be completed in full and returned to the City within thirty (30) days from the correction date identified on the administrative citation.

The request for an appeal hearing must be accompanied by either an advance deposit of the fine or a Request for a Hardship Waiver (Exhibit C). If the hardship waiver is denied, the Responsible Person shall deposit the fine amount within ten (10) days of receiving the notice of denial.

In the event the administrative citation is excused by the Hearing Officer, the City shall refund the deposited fine within three (3) business days.

B. Hardship Waiver

A person filing a request for an appeal hearing may also request a hardship waiver of the fine deposit. To allow time for the review of the hardship waiver request, the request for the appeal hearing shall be submitted to the City within fifteen (15) days from the correction date on the administrative citation.

The hardship waiver request must include a sworn affidavit, together with any supporting documents or materials demonstrating the person's actual financial inability to deposit the amount of the fine. The hardship waiver will be considered by the City Manager, or his or her designee. The City Manager will inform the Responsible Person in writing of whether the waiver was approved. The City Manager's determination is final and is not subject to appeal or judicial review.

If the hardship waiver is denied, the Responsible Person shall deposit the fine within ten (10) calendar days of the City Manager's notice. Failure to deposit the fine shall cancel the request for the appeal hearing and renders the fine delinquent.

C. Selection of Hearing Officer

The Hearing Officer will be selected from a panel of Hearing Officers appointed by the City Council (see Section VI for policies related to the Council appointment of Hearing Officers). The Hearing Officer shall be selected randomly by the City Manager, or his or her designee, prior to setting the date of the appeal hearing.

Any Hearing Officer residing or owning property within 500 feet of the subject property of the appeal shall be excluded from the selection process for that specific appeal hearing.

D. Request for Rescheduling a Hearing

The City will accommodate one request to reschedule the hearing provided that the request is made in writing by the person requesting an appeal hearing at least five (5) days prior to the scheduled hearing. Requests for rescheduling within five (5) days of the hearing must be considered for good cause (illness, death, emergency situation, etc.) and must be substantiated. The Hearing Officer will consider whether to reschedule the hearing.

E. Hearing Procedure

The following describes the rules and procedures for conducting an appeal hearing:

1. The appeal hearing cannot occur until the following have been completed:
 - a. An appeal hearing has been appropriately requested by the Responsible Person by submitting a Request for Appeal Hearing form.
 - b. The Responsible Person has deposited the administrative citation fine in advance or a hardship waiver has been issued.
 - c. A hearing has been established not less than fifteen (15) days and not more than sixty (60) days from the date of the request for the appeal hearing. The Responsible Person shall be notified of the date, time and place of the hearing at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing date.
 - d. At least ten (10) days prior to the hearing, the City shall provide the Responsible Person with copies of the citations, reports and other documents that will be submitted to the Hearing Officer at the time of the hearing.
2. City staff should not have contact with the Hearing Officer regarding the hearing subject so the Hearing Officer can maintain an attitude of neutrality and objectivity at all times.
3. City staff will arrange for the hearing, provide a hearing room and ensure that a tape recorder is in place.

4. The Hearing Officer shall conduct the appeal hearing and is responsible for ensuring that order is maintained and that due process is provided.
5. The person issued the administrative citation is entitled to bring legal representation to the hearing.
6. The Hearing Officer shall take testimony first from the Responsible Person. At this time the Responsible Person will have the opportunity to present evidence regarding the administrative citation's issuance.
7. Each party shall have an opportunity to question the other party's witnesses, if witnesses are included in the testimony.
8. Each party shall have an opportunity to present rebuttal evidence.
9. The Hearing Officer shall consider the evidence that is relative to whether the violation(s) occurred and whether the Responsible Person has caused or maintained the violation(s).
10. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply.
11. The Hearing Officer may continue the hearing to request additional information from the enforcement officer or the recipient of the administrative citation.
12. The Hearing Officer may or may not issue a decision orally at the conclusion of the hearing. Within ten (10) days of the hearing, the Hearing Officer shall provide the City and the recipient of the administrative citation with a written decision. The decision shall briefly state the reasons for the conclusion of the Hearing Officer.
13. The City is not required to provide transcripts of the hearing, but is required to provide copies of the tapes of the hearing at a cost determined by the City's Master Fee Schedule.
14. If the Responsible Person, or his or her representative, fails to appear at the hearing, the deposited fines shall be forfeited and the Responsible Person will have exhausted his or her administrative remedies.

F. Administrative Enforcement by Stipulation

Occasionally, the City and the Responsible Person will reach agreement prior to a scheduled hearing. When such an agreement is presented at the hearing, the Hearing Officer may issue a finding which incorporates the agreement. Such a

finding shall authorize or approve the terms of the agreement to ensure its validity and shall be entitled to an Administrative Enforcement Order by Stipulation.

G. Hearing Officer Authority

After conducting an appeal hearing and weighing the testimony and evidence presented, the Hearing Officer may make one of two decisions: 1) affirm the issuance of the administrative citation, or 2) excuse the administrative citation. The Hearing Officer's decision shall be final.

The Hearing Officer may impose conditions and deadlines to correct any violations or require payment of outstanding penalties. The Hearing Officer may also assess reasonable administrative costs for scheduling and processing of the hearing and subsequent actions. The Hearing Officer does not have authority to reduce the fine.

H. Judicial Review

Either the City or the person in receipt of an administrative citation may request review of the appeal hearing decision with the San Diego Superior Court. Judicial review of a citation may not occur without first exhausting all available administrative remedies.

SECTION V – CITATION FINES (WAIVERS AND PENALTIES)

A. Failure to Pay Fines

If the Responsible Person fails to pay the fines imposed through the administrative citation within the time specified on the citation, the City may file a claim with the Small Claims Court or the Superior Court for recovery of the fine. In the event the courts are used to recover fines, the City may also recover the costs associated with the Hearing Officer, court fees, and collection costs.

The City may also or in addition to court action, impose a code enforcement lien in the amount of the fine plus interest and late charges, on the real property upon which the violation occurs. Any lien imposed shall be recorded in the Office of the San Diego County Recorder.

B. Late Payment Penalty

Any Responsible Person that fails to pay a fine on or before the date payment is due shall be liable for payment of a late charge in the amount of 25 percent of the fine. Delinquent fines shall also accrue interest at the rate of 10 percent per month, excluding late payment penalties.

C. Reduction of Cumulative Fines

If the violation is corrected within a reasonable time after the decision of the Hearing Officer, the City Manager shall have the discretion to reduce cumulative fines that exceed \$1,000. The City Manager may not reduce the fine amount to less than \$1,000. The determination of the City Manager shall be final and shall not be subject to appeal or judicial review.

SECTION VI – HEARING OFFICER POLICY

A. Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish policies regarding the requirements to be, the City Council selection procedures of, the term of, and the rate of compensation for Hearing Officers.

B. Requirements of a Hearing Officer

The following criteria are established as requirements to be considered for the position of Hearing Officer:

1. A candidate is not required to be a resident of Lemon Grove. However, the distance within which the candidate resides may be a consideration factor in determining his or her ability to attend appeal hearings.
2. A Hearing Officer candidate must be able to conduct a hearing, analyze the City's Municipal Code, weigh evidence and make unbiased judgments based on evidence and testimony presented.
3. A Hearing Officer must possess effective communication skills—both verbal and written.
4. A Hearing Officer candidate may not have been issued an administrative citation with a fine for a period of 18 months from the time of applying for a Hearing Officer position.
5. In the event a Hearing Officer is issued an administrative citation with a fine while serving a term, he or she shall be disqualified as a Hearing Officer.
6. A Hearing Officer may not be a full or part-time employee of the City of Lemon Grove (including paid committee or commission members).

C. Selection of Hearing Officer Panel

The City Council may fill a panel of no less than three and no more than six Hearing Officers. Hearing Officers may apply in writing for consideration for Council

selection at any time, if the panel is not full. The Council may conduct interviews with the full Council or may appoint a sub-committee of members of the Council to administer the selection process. The full Council must ratify the appointment of a Hearing Officer to the panel.

D. Term of Hearing Officer

The term of the Hearing Officer shall be no more than three years. However, the Council may re-appoint a Hearing Officer through the selection process identified in the previous section. To create appropriate conclusion of terms, the Council may decide periodically, on a case-by-case basis, to reduce the length of a term to two years to create staggered terms on the Hearing Officer panel.

E. Hearing Officer Compensation

A Hearing Officer shall be compensated \$75 per appeal hearing. This amount is for travel, preparation time, conducting the hearing, and preparing the written decision. There shall be no additional payment in the event the Hearing Officer is requested to testify at a court proceeding. In the event the hearing is canceled after the Notice of Hearing has been established, the Hearing Officer shall be compensated \$40.

F. Conflict of Interest

Hearing Officers are required to disqualify themselves from serving as the Hearing Officer for a particular case if they have a personal or business relationship or any other type of relations, with any of the involved parties which might cause them to have a conflict of interest, bias or prejudice in regard to the case being heard.

In the event that the Hearing Officer believes that a conflict of interest does not exist but might be perceived, he or she is required to disclose to both the City and the appealing party the nature of any relationship that might cause such a perception. Either of the parties may then request that a new Hearing Officer be selected, provided that such request is made known to the Hearing Officer within three (3) business days of such disclosure.

In the event that the Hearing Officer does not disqualify himself or does not announce a relationship that might be perceived as a potential conflict of interest and either party believes that a conflict of interest may exist, that party may request that the City Manager select a different Hearing Officer. The City Manager shall determine whether or not to take such action based on the evidence presented of a relationship, prejudice or bias that might impede the Hearing Officer's ability to provide a fair hearing.

SECTION VII - OTHER PROCEDURES

A. Hostile Encounters

An enforcement officer shall not initiate physical force to halt, restrain or attempt to physically engage a code violator. If an enforcement officer is threatened by hostile or aggressive behavior or with bodily harm during the course of performing his or her duties, the enforcement officer shall leave the scene immediately, contact the Sheriff's Department, contact his or her immediate supervisor, and document the incident as part of the code case file.

If there is has been past aggressiveness or hostility from a resident, the enforcement officer shall not attempt to personally deliver notices and/or citations without the presence of a Sheriff Deputy. Otherwise, the enforcement officer may deliver notices and/or citations by way of mail as specified in this manual.

B. Entry Upon Private Property

No enforcement officer shall enter upon private property except in an attempt to contact the owner or occupant of the property or to post or deliver a notice and/or citation. The enforcement officer may access the property with the consent of the property owner or occupant or with a search warrant issued by the court.

C. Release of Information

In order to preserve effectiveness and not jeopardize investigative activities and to protect the privacy of involved parties, the following procedures apply to the release of information, once a case file is created:

1. Except in accordance with the direction of the City Attorney or to comply with a subpoena, the City shall not disclose:
 - a. That a complaint about a particular incident has been filed,
 - b. The fact that a case is pending, or
 - c. That a particular complaint is under investigation.
2. The City shall advise the complaining party that the complaint has been received and is under investigation.
3. Upon request, in accordance with the Public Records Act, the City shall disclose:
 - a. The date which has been set for a hearing before a Hearing Officer,
 - b. The date on which a citation has been set for court trial,

- c. The fact that a civil lawsuit has been filed and served.
- 4. Upon the closing of a case initiated by a private party's complaint, the complainant will be advised of the result, if so requested by the complainant.
- 5. Any information developed during the investigation shall be released only to City personnel actively and directly involved in the enforcement action.

EXHIBIT A – Administrative Citation Form



CITY OF LEMON GROVE ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

A) TYPE OF VIOLATION

Circle One: Warning 1st Citation \$100 2nd Citation \$200 3rd Citation \$500 4th Citation \$1,000

Payment of \$_____ is due no later than _____ to the City of Lemon Grove.
The City accepts cash, check or credit card.

If the violation is not corrected by the date specified therein and/or payment is not received by the date above, the next level of citation may be issued, other enforcement actions may occur, and penalties may be assessed (25% and interest at the rate of 10% per month). Payment of fine does not excuse or discharge the failure to correct violation identified below.

B) RESPONSIBLE PARTY INFORMATION

Person Cited: _____
(Last Name) (First Name)

Circle One: Property Owner Tenant Business Owner Other _____

Mailing Address: _____

Business Name (if applicable): _____

C) VIOLATION(S) INFORMATION

Date (Violation Observed): _____ Time (Violation Observed): _____

Location of Violation: _____
(Street Address) (APN)

Violation(s) Observed (Code Section and Description):

D) CORRECTION(S) REQUIRED (with date to complete corrections)

E) SERVICING CITATION INFORMATION

Enforcing Officer Name Phone No. Signature Date

Person Cited – Signature Acknowledging Receipt _____

(Date)

Citation Served (circle one): In Person By Mail Posted on Property

This citation may be appealed within thirty (30) days from date of correction identified in Section D. To request an appeal, a Request an Appeal Hearing form (available at City Hall) should be completed and returned to City Hall. In the event a Hardship Waiver is requested, the Request for an Appeal Hearing and Hardship Waiver forms are required within fifteen (15) days from the correction date identified in Section D.

EXHIBIT B – Request for Appeal Hearing Form



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

3232 Main Street
Lemon Grove, CA 91945
Telephone (619) 825-3800
Fax (619) 825-3804

REQUEST FOR APPEAL HEARING FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

Name: _____

Address of Violation: _____

Day Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Violation of Code (see Section C of Citation): _____

Please state the reason(s) for the request. The Municipal Code allows the recipient of an Administrative Citation to contest whether a violation(s) exist or whether they are the Responsible Person. If you require more space, please attach additional sheets.

Appellant's Statement

I declare under penalty of perjury that the facts stated are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature _____

Date _____

Process for Submitting Request for an Appeal Hearing:

- 1) An individual requesting an appeal hearing must submit this form to the City **on or before 30 days** from the date of correction identified in Section D of the Citation.
- 2) The individual requesting an appeal **must deposit with the City the amount of the citation fine** along with this form.
- 3) If the individual requesting the appeal hearing requests a Hardship Waiver, this form and the Request for a Hardship Waiver are due **on or before 15 days** from the date of correction identified in Section D of the Citation.
- 4) A Request for Hardship Waiver form is available at City Hall.
- 5) A hearing will be established between 15 and 60 days from receipt of this form with a Hearing Officer appointed by the City Council of the City of Lemon Grove.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Received on: _____
Date

Within Deadline: _____
Yes or No

Completed Form: _____
Yes or No

EXHIBIT C – Request for Hardship Waiver Form



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

3232 Main Street
Lemon Grove, CA 91945
Telephone (619) 825-3800
Fax (619) 825-3804

REQUEST FOR HARDSHIP WAIVER FOR ADVANCE DEPOSIT REQUIREMENT

Name: _____

Address of Violation: _____

Day Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Fine Amount on Citation: _____ Present Employer: _____

Social Security #: _____ Driver's License # _____

List of Family Members Living with You:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Employer</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Total Family Income (before taxes and deductions from ALL sources):

Employment:	\$ _____	Child Support:	\$ _____
Spouse Employment:	\$ _____	Spousal Support:	\$ _____
Unemployment:	\$ _____	Pension/Retirement:	\$ _____
Welfare/SSI/ADC:	\$ _____	Other:	\$ _____

TOTAL INCOME: \$ _____

Monthly Expenses

Rent/Mortgage:	\$ _____	Payroll Deductions:	\$ _____
Child Care:	\$ _____	Medical Expenses:	\$ _____
Transportation Costs:	\$ _____		

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$ _____

Assets

Savings Account: \$ _____
Other Cash Assets: \$ _____

Checking Account: \$ _____
Other Assets: \$ _____

TOTAL ASSETS: \$ _____

Submit with Request for Hardship Waiver form copies of (if applicable):

- ▶ Last year's tax return (with W-2s or 1099s)
- ▶ Pay stubs for last 2-week period
- ▶ Other _____
- ▶ Utility billing with Lifeline rates
- ▶ Recent Chapter 7 Bankruptcy filing

I declare under penalty of perjury that the information contained herein are full and true statements of my assets and obligation to the best of my knowledge and belief. The undersigned authorizes the City of Lemon Grove to contact my employer, if any, listed above without further notice.

I understand that this hardship consideration is for the deferral of the administrative citation fine during the appeal hearing process. If during the appeal hearing process the citation is found to be valid, the full amount of the citation fine is due and payable.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Process for Submitting Request for a Hardship Waiver:

- 1) An individual requesting a Hardship Waiver must submit this form with the Request for an Appeal Hearing **on or before 15 days** from the date of correction identified in Section D of the Citation.
- 2) The Hardship Waiver will be reviewed by the City Manager, or his or her designee.
- 3) The City Manager's determination in granting the Hardship Waiver is final and not subject to appeal or judicial review.
- 4) If the Hardship Waiver is denied, the appellant is required to deposit the fine amount within ten (10) calendar days of the City Manager's Notice of Denial. Failure to deposit the fine shall cancel the request for an appeal hearing and will render the fine delinquent.

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Received on: _____
Date

Within Deadline: _____
Yes or No

Completed Form: _____
Yes or No

EXHIBIT D – Notice of Appeal Hearing



CITY OF LEMON GROVE

3232 Main Street
Lemon Grove, CA 91945
Telephone (619) 825-3800
Fax (619) 825-3804

NOTICE OF APPEAL HEARING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE CITATION

DATE

Requestor: John Doe
1111 Anywhere Street
City, State zipcode

Please be informed that your request for an Appeal Hearing for Administrative Citation shall be heard as follows:

Date: May xx, 2006

Time: 10:00 A.M.

Location 3232 Main Street
Lemon Grove, CA
City Hall Conference Room

The hearing procedures shall be in accordance with the Lemon Grove Municipal Code Section 1.12.012 and the Administrative Citation Procedures Manual (see attachment).

You may have legal representation at the hearing. However, you must provide written notification to the Hearing Officer and the City's Enforcement Officer of the attorney's name, address, and phone number at least seven (7) calendar days prior to the hearing:

Assigned Hearing Officer: Mr. or Ms. _____, Hearing Officer
c/o Robert Larkins
3232 Main Street
Lemon Grove, CA 91945

Failure of the Responsible Person, either personally or through counsel, to appear at the appeal hearing shall constitute a forfeiture of the fine and will exhaust his or her administrative remedies. As an option, you are afforded one opportunity to reschedule the hearing, only if the request is made at least five (5) days prior to the scheduled hearing. Requests for rescheduling within five (5) days of the hearing must be considered for good cause (illness, death, emergency situation, etc.) and must be substantiated. The Hearing Officer will consider whether to reschedule the hearing. The request to reschedule the hearing must be made in writing and delivered or received at the address above at least five (5) days before the scheduled hearing.